

A Crack in the Hourglass



A Crack in the Hourglass

collection of short stories

High Tech High International

To our families and our ancestors.

Introduction

This collection of stories was a school assignment in which we were supposed to write about our experience traveling back to a time of difficulty in a place of our ancestral origins. The effort put into this collection turned into a point of pride as this project comes together.

I shouldn't call it a school assignment or a project anymore. For me, this has become a product of our group's creativity. Each person was tasked with a certain job in which they needed to be responsible for during the process. Malia Oto designed the graphics for our cover, Riley Oliver and Dylan Veloria worked to format and style our book, Charlie Schooner and Adrian Alaniz edited and proofread through the stories, Rami Dally fact-checked every story and I worked to oversee each responsibility and make sure the final product was polished and professional as the Editor-in-Chief. These people made it possible for this collection to be a perfect piece of historical fiction.

We came across many difficulties in the creation process, such as looming deadlines and disagreements, but with the help of Dr. Samantha Carrick and Reiko Anderson, our problems were solved easily. There were many times in this project where I was stressed out because I was too worried about the final product being anything less than perfect.

But, through our perseverance, our group created something spectacular. I introduce to you, *A Crack in the Hourglass*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'An Tran', with a stylized, loopy 'A' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

An Tran
Editor-in-Chief

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The Patriot

by Charlie Schooner

This story started with my first trip. It was brief and sudden, but I knew enough about US history to realize where I was: New York, 1776. It was pretty obvious, the accents, the clothing, the mannerisms, the constant stares and of course: the 30,000 British troops in the city. As I walked around, it became more apparent that I needed some new clothes, a hoodie and khakis weren't exactly the clothes you'd see people walking around in during the Revolutionary War. I quickly ran into an alleyway as a British patrol turned the corner. They wouldn't like what I was wearing either. I picked up a large grey coat off a sleeping man in the alley. The coat reeked of alcohol and was as coarse as sandpaper. It wasn't ideal but at least I'd get through the city relatively unnoticed.

As I passed through the other side of the alleyway a man burst through the window of a tavern carrying what looked like a ledger.

Two Redcoats followed him in pursuit, "Stop that man! Stop that traitor!"

The soldiers shouted into the crowd. A third Red Coat stepped out of the tavern, this one obviously an officer. He dragged a man with him, a seemingly innocent looking man.

"Hang this man for conspiring against The Crown."

He commanded in a loud yet cool tone. Now this wasn't my brightest idea, but I followed the path of the man who started the scene in the first place.

However, it looked like the Redcoats got the same idea. As I caught up to this unknown spy, so did the British soldiers. Just as I thought, they'd lose me in the alley, I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder, *who could that be? Wait a min-*

"Hello?" I questioned "Is anyone there?" Wondering where he was I spun around and faced him, he had short brown hair, green eyes and freckles not too different from mine.

"Sir, I'm terribly sorry to bother you but could I borrow that coat of yours?" The spy asked, "Oh..uh sure... I suppose." I had no idea how to sound normal so the words came out in probably the worst British accent anyone's ever heard. The man didn't seem to mind though. His face lit up with a mix of joy and relief as he swiftly took the coat right off of me.

"Thank you so much good sir, I won't forget this kind deed of yours!" He wrapped the coat around his shoulders and seamlessly disappeared into the crowd.

For a second, I completely forgot that I was even there, then the British ran around the corner and reminded me where I was.

“You! With the funny blouse!” One of the soldiers commanded, “State your business in the city of New York!” I turned to face him, he was all the way at the end of the alleyway. He was flanked by four more soldiers, all pointing their guns right at me.

“I said state your business in the city of New York.” He commanded again in a more annoyed tone, “Is something wrong with your head boy?” This time he started moving towards me.

“I’m not asking again!” He took another step and the instant his foot hit the ground, I was in my bed.

At first, I thought it was all a dream, but that wouldn't explain why I was wearing the same clothes or why it was the middle of the day. I had a hunch I'd be visiting that era again and I wasted no time gathering supplies for my journey. Looking online, I found an old map of New England and the Pennsylvania region. I purchased a cotton jacket and shirt, a pair of linen trousers and a hat off of a reenactment store. I ordered some old military surplus items. I got a canteen, griddle, some old cavalry boots, an entrenching shovel and some field dressing. I spent the whole day removing any insignia off of my equipment. I also packed a survival bag. Inside of it were matches, a compass, toilet paper, a hatchet, a survival knife, flint for when I can't use matches and pliers. The bag itself was an unmarked canvas rucksack. I also packed a first aid kit. I put some surgical scissors, antibiotics, and antiseptics inside of it along with the field dressing. Finally, I got a lightweight pole backpacking tent and a fur mat to sleep on.

After packing all my stuff, I waited. It took about three hours of sitting around in that stupid outfit before I was sent back in time. The first time, I was in New York. I wasted no time getting as far away from the city and the British as I could. I stopped at a small trading post that would later become Buffalo, New York. I apprenticed at a blacksmith and through his guidance, I learned how to fix, modify, and create parts of different guns. After working for him for a while, I offered to buy a firearm and compensate him with free work inside and outside of the shop. For about six weeks I did that until the contract was fulfilled. I, then, set out to the Allegheny Forest. I set up camp near Lake Erie and for about three months, I survived in the

wilderness by hunting. I set up a standard routine with my time in the wild. I'd start off my morning with some fish from the lake and wash it down with some coffee from the trading post. I'd then patrol the surrounding area of my camp and check for any animals or other people. One of my patrols stood out to me, however. On that morning, I found a trail of footsteps. These weren't any normal footsteps though.

These were British army boots. I tracked the footsteps all the way back to my camp. *How could I have been so reckless!?* I sprinted back to camp taking the shortest route I could remember. When I got to camp, Everything was relatively in order. Except for the rustling in my tent. I had expected more than one soldier but nonetheless, I had to deal with him. I shouldered my rifle and cocked it. The sound of the metallic clicking alone stopped all the movement in the tent. My heart rate jumped and it was as if my senses were cranked up to eleven. *Am I really going to do this?* In the moment, I honestly didn't believe that I could actually kill someone. I wasn't ready to end someone's life but I wasn't ready to let mine end at the hand of a Redcoat. I just needed to take one thing at a time.

"Put your hands up and slowly move out of my tent" I ordered the stranger.

The rustling started again as the stranger moved out of the tent. First, his hands poked out and I noticed that there wasn't a trace of red on his arms. His sleeves were blue like those of a Continental Army uniform.

"You're not British..." I said in a troubled tone. "Why, of course, I'm not a damned Redcoat!" said the stranger. His head poked out of the tent and I swear I had recognized his voice before. He turned his head to face me and I got a good look at him.

"I'm Arthur Taylor, Continental Soldier at your service and pleased to meet you." He said cheerfully. That's where it hit me. The brown hair, green eyes, and freckles. *It's the guy from New York!* I couldn't believe the coincidence.

"Well, I'm also pleased to meet you but I believe we've already met." I said. Arthur looked at me for a second and his eyes lit up.

"Oh yes, I remember you young lad! You handed me the coat in my hour of need!" He said. "I hadn't forgotten about that coat, old friend. You saved my life and in return, I got you an

even better coat.” Arthur reached back into my tent and pulled out probably the most expensive coat I've ever seen.

“Picked this off of a fur trader on my way here,” Arthur said.

“That's not a very soldier-like thing to do...” I wasn't too excited about a thief going through my tent and possessions. Arthur glanced at me with an excited look.

“I'm not your typical soldier,” He said.

Arthur filled me in with all the details. He was a spy that had been working in New York for months. That tavern fight I had seen was when he had been given a ledger tracking troop movements, strategies, plans and basically anything a general of the Army would need to win the war. However, Arthur also told me about a group of soldiers lead by the captain from my first trip and they were in the area. His name was Robert Smith and if he found Arthur, all would be lost.

A few weeks passed and Arthur also filled me in on his plan. We were going to steal some horses from the nearby camp and make our way to Philadelphia. We will then turn in the ledger and give the Army a chance to win the war. The camp wasn't too far, we'd scoped it out a few nights before. There was one big problem, however, 40 British troops and 60 hessian mercenaries. The two of us stood no chance against 100 of the best soldiers in the colonies. If we were going to do this, it needed to be done quietly.

The night of the escape was upon us. Arthur and I set out at dawn and made it to the camp by nightfall. It was one of the most vibrant places I've ever seen, there was drinking, partying, games and even a shooting competition between the two groups at camp. This was perfect for us. While the troops were having a good time, we'd escape on their horses.

Arthur pulled me aside.

“I have a plan.” He said.

“Thanks to the British and Germans having a friendly competition, it gives us the perfect opportunity to take out the guards.” He gestured at my rifle. *I'm not ready to kill, I can't kill, what would happen to the future?*

“I can't kill anyone.” I whispered to Arthur.

“It's against my conscience.” I said.

Arthur looked back at me and said, "Very well, then. We best knock them out."

Before we went into the camp, Arthur and I removed our shoes to move silently. We crept through the camp, dodging the twigs and stopping every few seconds when the chatter momentary died down. It was pitch black except for the light of the fires. Two conflicting smells arose from the camp. One of a bountiful scent of pork, roasted vegetables, and endless pints of beer. The other was of vomit, urine, and the foulest smells ever. We were right next to the outhouse. I took my next steps very careful now that I realized where I was.

We stalked in the shadows, waiting for the guards to isolate. Every once in a while, a few of the troops would have to relieve themselves in the bushes. Arthur and I would hear there obnoxious bragging about the local women or the battles they fought in. It was my turn to take them out. In the darkness and my bare feet, I took caution moving towards the British. My foot landed on a small twig, the piercing sound of the crack felt as though it would go for miles. They stopped for a moment and scanned the forest going back to their business after a few seconds. I grabbed the back of my rifle and smacked both the soldiers in the back of the head.

Arthur and I continued to sneak around the camp until we found the horses, feeding them apples so they would shut up. We saddled up on them and rode away from camp. We made our way to Philadelphia and Arthur and I parted ways. I told him that it would be best to not tell Congress about me and just say he did it on his own and we parted ways. I teleported back to my time and I couldn't believe it. It's like I never left.

Famine Madness

by Dylan Veloria

It was a Saturday morning, I had nothing to do today so I decided to eat some cookies for breakfast. Getting up was always a challenge on weekdays but effortless on Saturdays and Sundays. As I walk downstairs, I immediately start feeling dizzy and nauseated. My head starting spinning more and more, scared I might fall I attempt to grip the staircase rail out of fear I might get seriously hurt, or die right here and end up in one of a embarrassing article titled, "Man vs Staircase. Man loses." Just as I thought I felt the rail firmly well, I missed, grabbed a handful of air instead And then everything went black.

I wake up and felt my legs and arms, *unbroken!*

"Excuse me sir, could you get out of the way?" An unknown voice whom I've never heard before called out to me.

At the velocity I was going at, I should have at least fractured a bone, or had a concussion, but nothing. I hadn't even realized where I was or who was talking to me. I turned to get a good look at the individual calling to me and then I suddenly realize I'm not in my home anymore, I was lying down on a sidewalk somewhere outside.

"Where am I?!" I yelled.

Having no idea where I was or what I was doing here or how I got here. It seemed he was losing his patience, at the same rate I was losing my mind. I rushed to pull myself up from the ground and I stumbled, still feeling dizzy.

"My name's Jack. Are you alright there?" he asked me, looking slightly concerned.

I could tell I wasn't the only thing on his mind. He was much taller than me, with a top hat on, brown eyes, tight knee breeches, a linen shirt, knitted wool stockings, and heavy shoes. His top hat was made of felt. I decided it was time to get out of there so I ignored his question and walked away not looking back. I still don't even know where I am or how I got here, kind of having a mini panic attack but I kept my sanity intact as I didn't want to make a scene in front of a lot of people. I started to realize that the people around me spoke with a very strong accent, it sounded Irish. Their clothes, too. They looked rather odd, some kind of style I've never seen before.

Feeling very hungry, I haven't even eaten breakfast yet, so I decided to look for some food. So I started looking to see if there was a nearby subway I could eat at. I ask someone where a subway was and he asked

"Excuse me sir, what's a subway?"

I must be dreaming. This is all a dream, surely I'll wake up from it soon. He just stood there looking at me, waiting for a reply. My head started feeling dizzy, I felt nausea again.

"Why are you acting a fool?" He said, meanwhile I felt like I was going to collapse again. I felt my mouth closing.

"What year is it?" I uttered out to the man.

"Why it's 1845, sir, do you need help?" The man said.

"Yes! Please call 911!" I shouted at the top of my lungs.

"No I mean mentally?" he said, looking at me curiously. I noticed other people around me started looking at me. Just then I came falling, losing control over my legs, in his direction and the last thing I saw was the man quickly reacting, holding out his arms and trying to catch me.

"What a dream!" I said out loud. I woke up on the floor at the bottom of my staircase.

That... that couldn't have been a dream. I looked at my hands, they looked real, this felt like reality, I wasn't dreaming. I got up and ran to the kitchen as fast as I could to get a drink of some water. As the liquid went down my throat, quenching my thirst, I suddenly remembered how hungry I was. I got some chocolate chip cookies out and ate them vigorously, stuffing each one into my mouth and swallowing it the moment I knew I wouldn't choke on it. They were so delicious. But it suddenly occurred to me that I traveled back time. That man I met, he said the year was 1845. *What?! I must've went back in time! Oh my god! This is crazy, but how did that happen!? Okay I need to buy some supplies, in case it happens again. Okay I need to research what happened in 1845, the people had an accent. I think they had Irish accents! Oh my god they were from Ireland, I was in Ireland! I hopped on the computer and searched google*

"Clothing from 1800s". No I better be more specific.

“Clothing from 1845”. I clicked the top link on google and read through. Apparently the Irish Potato Famine was a big disaster in 1845, millions of Irish people starved and died. Okay. Millions more migrated out of the area.

“1845 Ireland clothing!” If I am sent back there again, I must be prepared to blend in with my fellow Irish people. *Oh yeah! I just realized I’m a quarter Irish! Alright, I will order a bunch of stuff I know I’ll need tomorrow...*

I woke up the next day and I was sparked with newfound energy, meaning, and purpose. I felt this strange aura that I was going to be sent back in time again.

“How exciting!” I yelled out loud, remembering that I live alone. I get up from bed and I begin to order everything I needed online.

A chainsaw, potatoes, freeze-dried food, nausea pills, antibiotics, apples, small tape recorder, lifestraw, lighter, book, leather bag, four old fashioned water containers, tight knee breeches, a linen shirt, knitted wool stockings, heavy shoes, and a tall top hat made of felt to top it all off. I’ll probably be seen as rich and powerful because only rich people in Ireland wore top hats. I’ll bring my best kitchen knife. I’ll also need to convert all my money into pounds, I may not have been the smartest kid in geography but I knew Ireland was somewhere in Europe.

I braced myself and already predicted how I’ll teleport. After 30 minutes, I was fully convinced that it wasn’t going to work. Sad and depressed especially after buying a lot of stuff I didn’t use in the end, I slowly put down my stuff on the couch and began taking off my 1845 Irish clothing. But then it happened. Right when I least expected it, my head started spinning faster than it’s ever spun before, my entire body was going numb, I vigorously button my shirt, and grab my stuff but fell over while doing so. Then everything went black.

The next day I found myself back in Leinster, 1845, or what I thought was Leinster according to my quick research. I found Jack’s neighborhood miraculously, *I’m stuck here*. Feeling stranded, I got this mystic feeling unexplained by words that I wasn’t going to be returning any time soon. I rented one of the homes for a cheap price, thanks to the money I

converted to pounds. Jack and I coincidentally lived next to each other, and it didn't help I was starving so I decided to take his potatoes so that I can survive.

That night, I was feeling a fever coming over me so I placed my antibiotic pills in my pockets. *Just in case*, I thought. I set out for his house in the afternoon and to my surprise there were so many potatoes just laying around his kitchen! Most of them were bagged, with the top tied so they wouldn't fall out. They were really heavy so I just took one bag back to my house. I snuck in through the front door so this time to avoid being caught I will go through the back door. Just as I managed to close the door behind me, *Jack spotted me!*

"Jack! it's not what it looks like man!" I screamed in his direction.

I ran for it, I left the bag on the floor and started running towards my home and locked the door shut. Up until now Jack and I were pretty neutral but now he's on to me, I could feel it. It doesn't help the fact he was already suspicious of me at the very beginning. Scared out of my mind that Jack might come to get me, I somehow drift into a deep sleep hoping I will wake up in my real bed.

The next day I found out I wasn't in my bed, I was still in Leinster, 1845.

"The force won't let me return." I came to the only realization, the truth. *The conflict between me and Jack is preventing me from going to the future, but why?* I checked my pockets, *missing!* My antibiotic pills were missing.

Oh crap! I must've dropped them. The sudden fear and adrenaline started pumping through out my veins. I looked outside my window and I saw Jack on his front lawn, holding my antibiotics! My fever situation wasn't looking any better so I had to decide what to do. The time vortex wasn't letting me back because history will be altered if Jack contacts the authorities and shows them that revolutionary medicine. In the wrong hands, it could permanently damage history.

I need to secure my antibiotics before this cold takes ahold of me, all of history was now in my hands, whether I liked it or not. I thought going back in time would be fun, maybe adventurous, exciting, but now I realize the full consequences, never been born, or the universe collapsing, things I never thought messing this up would do this to me. I caught Jack off guard and snatched the pills from his hand by force when he wasn't looking and I was sent back to the

future. I was home, but I was woozy. I found myself on the floor and drooling. I gazed upon my living room, potatoes were everywhere from when I left I must've dropped them. They were sprouting and made the whole house smelled bad, so I guess I've been gone for about 2 weeks. Life continued as normal however, the events of the past have affected me in more ways than I let show, they were embedded in my mind. But it doesn't matter now, those events are now history.

The Journal

by Adrian Alaniz

As a child, I was interested in time travel because I thought it would be really cool to see my ancestors and all the wars that they fought for my parents and me to be alive. I never got to meet my great grandfather. My older brother, being 30 years old, was lucky enough and had the chance to do so. I always asked him about my great grandpa but he does not say much about him.

"We don't talk of the dead. We let them rest in peace." he said. As I was thinking who to ask about my Abuelo en Paz descansa, I thought to myself, might as well ask his son. My grandpa was in the hospital because he had heart problems. My family and I went to go and visit him at 2:00 pm the next day. When we got to the hospital they signed us in then we went to go and visit him he was up and talking to my parents it got kind of late and my grandpa fell asleep out of nowhere.

It was about 6 o'clock and we were all hungry so my family went to get food. I stayed behind and watched T.V. as my grandpa slept. After a short time, my grandpa woke up and asked where everyone was, I told him that they had gone to get food.

"Cómo era tu papá?" I asked my grandpa.

He said, "Mi papá era alto y muy fuerte, él hizo muchas cosas y salvó muchas vidas. El era el vaquero de Puebla en México. Mi papá trabajaba con Benito Juárez, el jefe del ejército Mexicano. Tengo una libreta en mi cuarto, esta libreta es muy importante porque mi papá escribía dentro de esta libreta y me la dieron a mí."

"Tiene un poco de sangre dentro de la libreta, pero no te asustes ya esta vieja." I said, "Abuelo no me asustes porque a mí no me gusta la sangre."

My abuelito replied, "Pues para leer esta libreta te va a sacar un poquito de sangre."

As soon as I heard, I murmured, "I never want to find that notebook," I said to myself.

When my parents came inside the room, I sprinted out of the room crying because I was so scared that if I find that notebook it might cut off my finger. I was too scared to even say anything to my parents. The week after, my parents left me home alone because I hadn't cleaned my room at all. I was at home all weekend, cleaning and cleaning.

I was in my closet just looking through stuff when I found a journal that said *La Libreta de Julian Alaniz*. On one side of the journal, it had a lock. I attempted to open it with my fingers

by trying to crack the lock open but it didn't let me. I kept on trying and I somehow cut my finger right in the middle of my thumb. I wondered how that happened since I didn't feel any pain when I was cut. I got mad and threw the book somewhere in the living room.

The week went on, with me trying to not to think of the journal. I was very curious about it, but at the same time very scared of finding the journal. I went back to my room and I found it on my bed. I went and picked up the journal, but this time it didn't have a lock on it. I opened the book and there was some blood on the inside of the cover. There were three drops of blood. According to my grandpa, one was said to be from my his dad and the other two drops were of my grandpa, who tried opening it, too. I realized that when I tried opening the book last week, it had cut me and that was the key to open the lock.

I turned the page and it had instructions, they said that you need to have these things with you to read the next page. I wasn't going to go and waste my time looking for all these things. I turned to the next page, and I saw that the page was empty, with no writing. The page was just blank. I kept on turning pages, page after page but there was nothing at the end of the book. I didn't understand how the pages were blank. I wondered if they faded away.

So I said to myself, "Ok, let's find all the things and put all the clothes on."

I got a sombrero, leather pants, botas de vaquero, a shirt, and a vest. It also said I needed materials to survive. I thought to myself, *I can survive by myself, I can fight and I can cure myself if I ever get injured. What if I get injured so badly from a spider or a snake bite that people won't be able to help me?* Thoughts ran through my mind like race cars. *No one will know me so where would I sleep?* So I got the material in my room, it took about a couple weeks to gather all the materials and clothes. I couldn't wait for the pages to appear the cloth was all stiffy and I looked weird like if I was audicing for some movie or something.

When I opened the journal again, this time the pages started filling with words. Once the page started filling up with words I started reading. Julian was describing what was happening.

He said, "Hoy va ser el día que peleamos por mi familia y mi gente. Vamos a pelear contra los españoles, los europeos, y los frances. No podemos pagar lo que nos prestaron y no quieren esperar nomas necesitamos un poco de tiempo para regresar el dinero que usamos."

As I started reading more, I looked up and noticed I wasn't home. I was in some wooden building. It was cold and smelled bad. I came to the conclusion that it was a restroom stall. I went outside of the stall and it was dark. It smelled like a farm, there was campfires and tents outside all set-up with little lanterns.

As I was walking around the camp, a guy put a gun to the back of my head and said, "¿¡Quien eres!?" I had never thought of a name for myself if I ever went back in time so I said, "Mi nombre es Mateo Hernández." He released the pressure of the gun from my head and told me to walk with him.

He said, "Se ve que no te has bañado en un buen tiempo." My boots were dirty and my pants were also dirty because I found them outside while it was raining and they were covered in the mud.

I responded to the man, "Si camine un poco para llegar a esta pueblo."

He said, "Prepárate para la guerra que vamos a tener." He, then, gave me a revolver and a belt full of bullets so heavy, it felt like an exercise. I read something like this in the journal, it said that we will be fighting against the Spanish, French, and Europeans.

This war is between Benito Juarez and Napoleon III. I will have to prepare for the battle tomorrow when they come to Mexico. It was early in the morning. It felt like I barely got any sleep, I started looking for the man that led me to the camp and realized that he was Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín. He was the General that led the Mexican army to victory.

He grabbed my shoulder and said, "¡Vamos apurate!"

I responded, "Ok, ya voy."

We started walking for no reason. In the distance, there was a camp from the French as if they have been here for a while. The only color we saw were of the French, not the Spanish or the Europeans. We looked around the camp and no one was there, we retreated and a *vaquero* had come and give us the news that the French have taken over some of our camps. As soon as we heard the news everybody got on a horse and we ran to each camp. We saw some of our camps torched. Tears were running down *vaquero's* faces; it was a motivation to fight back and take back our land.

As we passed more of our camps and we stopped by one of the camps and walked our way over. We saw that there was some French soldiers still raiding our camp. We killed the soldiers one by one taking back what was ours. As everybody was going to the horses I stayed back looking around the camp for more people when I saw a French soldier holding a gun ready to kill Ignacio. I grabbed my gun but I couldn't kill him. Instead I shot the man in his leg and called over the army and had them deal with the man they walked me back to the horse and just killed the man. As we ran through camps making sure no one was there we found some soldiers and seized them not killed because we needed information to find out where Napoleon was hiding none of them opened there sold his location.

A boy asked, "Serons-nous libres je te l'ai dit." One of our men translated for me and told me what he meant. "Will we be free if I tell you?"

I responded to him and said, "Yes, you will be free, but you will have to go straight home."

She replied, "Ils vont au centre du Mexique," which meant that they are headed toward the center of Mexico. As I promised we let them go home.

We rode day and night to heading to Puebla where Napoleon was hiding. We rode through the night being silent like the wind hearing the French soldiers laughter. We found a camp it looked very unusual, there was big horses tents were set up. We went in the camp silently not making no noise. We saw soldiers sleeping and we looked inside each tent when we found the Napoleon preparing outside his tent. We waited until he headed in his camp and looked at his plan and waited the next day for them to attack. Our army separated we took 40 soldiers with us to go back to the camp where Napoleon. When we got there, Napoleon was getting on his horse and we shot the horse. He started to run but my men were there waiting for him. We took him in his tent and gave him an ultimatum: sign that we won't pay them for what we owed and die. He ended the war and retreated back to his country. We killed all the French that were left in Mexico.

Ductu and Ignis

by Riley Oliver

As Fannie Flagg once said,

“Don’t give up before the miracle happens.”

Yeah, that miracle did not happen.

If you call being stuck in a terrible job with almost being paid minimum wage a miracle then you need more help than I do. I just hate my job to death and especially my co-workers. My boss is by far the most annoying out of them all, always cracking and whining at me,

“Do this,” or “Do that.” Her name is Samantha and it is pretty much torture with her around. I have a meeting today with some of the managers and if I fail this I might get fired which will be bad, however, if I do good on this I might get a raise so I gotta make this or I will be dead. Since the business income and profit is going straight down I was assigned the sorrowful task of making a 20% cut to expenses and that means people, too. And if I do badly at this, I could be fired with that 20%. The day of the meeting came and I parked my car that sounded like it was just giving up on life like me. Walking towards the glass doors, I looked at the tall concrete building as it gave me butterflies.

“I have to ace this presentation,” I told myself.

Gulping out of fright, I open the doors. Walking in, the secretary already recognizes who I am. I go straight towards the elevator trying not to think of what will happen if this does not work out. Looking at the elevator, I realize it is pretty packed, yet somehow I manage to squeeze in and the elevator doors close behind me.

Calming down a bit I start to smell something, perfume to be exact a very “peachy” smell reminding of someone I do not want to see right now. In horror, I slowly tilt my head to my left and I see the devil itself, Samantha. Not trying to start any small talk, I jerk my head to my original position but it was already too late I heard her start to talk and I thought to myself,

“Oh god! Why now?” She said in a curious tone, “Sooooo... you ready for the meeti-”

Before she could finish her sentence the elevator doors open to our floor and I rush out, going straight towards the meeting room.

Opening the doors to the meeting room I plop my stuff near the projector, I start to organize my papers getting ready for my presentation. Coming in the room are some old guys,

an old lady, and my boss. Looking at their cold and dead faces I could tell they wanted this to be done and see whom to fire already. Coughing to get their attention I start my presentation,

“So, I think we know why we’re here and I have tried my hardest to piece together a more peaceful solution to this cut.”

“I think what we shoul-” Not even getting a chance to finish my sentence, I black out and when I wake up, I am going down this black tube. While descending down the black tube, I look around and see my memories taunting me of their existence. I end up feeling woozy and passing out when I reach total darkness and my thoughts fade away.

I wake up face first in the sand which was hot to the touch. I quickly get up and become confused about where and how I got here. Heat waves, Tumbleweeds rolling around it seems like the perfect place for the west. Soon after looking around I realize there was a bag, perfectly placed to my right. My curiosity soon teasing me I open the bag to find a bunch of supplies, survival supplies to be more specific.

I now question if I was brought here for a reason or maybe it was like the Hunger Games and people watched as I suffer. My insanity now soon catching up to my standards. I only had one objective. I actually had a lot of them but my most important objective was to survive. I soon sprang into action as I look very thorough through the bag. While looking through the bag I find a map and compass. Looking at the map and the shape of the country or island it was nothing like North America or of any country I could remember. Desperately I look at the map more carefully and I now see that it is a more modern map. Now my eye gazed at the top right-hand corner of the map and I saw what seemed to be a word. *Maybe it'll tell me where I am?* “Australia,” it said. You could see the horror coming from my face as I realized I’m in the deadliest country in the world.

I can't be dumb anymore. This is life or death. I continue looking at the landscape and comparing it to what I saw. I took a dumb guess and said I was in Western Australia due to the landscape I could see around me and what it showed on the map. Using that information I saw that the nearest city is Geraldton.

Trying to calm myself down for what I got myself into I soon start to brainstorm ideas of what I could do. My brightest idea was to cry, however, I knew I could do better than that. After doing what every man has to do I got the brilliant idea of using the compass and the map to start to walk the way towards Geraldton. And so I started my dangerous journey not shortly after devising the plan.

After a long and painful afternoon walking throughout Western Australia finding no shelter or civilization in site, giving up was sounding good. My thirst for water, however, came first. So I reached for the canteen packed in the bag and I took a sip while continuing forward until I heard a sound. The sound was familiar to footsteps, many, many footsteps from what I heard behind the hill.

I don't ever remember anything with that many numbers in Australia.

And soon heard a car engine. Now confused and terrified for my life I look around for cover and the only thing I could find was a big rock that I could hide behind. I soon become committed to the plan as the footsteps became louder and louder. Now making a mad dash for the rock, I try not to look at the hill but soon realize in horror what was making the footsteps, an Emu.

The only reason why I knew what it looked like was that my relatives from Australia sent me a postcard with an Emu on it. But soon after that one Emu, many more came with the sound of the car right behind their trail. The car had a mounted gun shooting at the emus which was surprising, confusing, and most notably, terrifying. I saw that the emus were approaching me at high speeds with the car on the right of them. I was to the left of emus so the spray of bullets they were firing could hit.

I had barely any time to react.

Still hiding behind the rock I hold my breath praying not to get shot by accident. I could hear the bullets hitting the rock bouncing off at rapid rates and sometimes I could hear it go into the rock. I felt like it lasted forever and was just waiting for a bullet to go into me. I was still waiting there in horror, holding my breath waiting for them to disappear into the hot and glazed desert. I peeked a glance as I heard the gunfire slowly fade away into the distance. Looking around I saw dead emus everywhere, some even still alive crying in pain. This made me

sick to my stomach as I was what they call a city boy. Just looking at that much blood made me puke in my mouth a little. I could even smell the rotting flesh all around making me barf on the ground profusely. Never have I ever seen this horror in real life heck I couldn't even compare it to video games. Soon after I stop barfing I look around to see if the gunshots caught the attention of anything friendly, or dangerous nearby. I saw nothing so I guess I was safe for now.

I continue onward heading in the direction I presumed was toward Geraldton. Not thinking of the emus. However, nightfall soon corrupted the sky and it was about to become pitch dark. From what I saw today, I didn't want to walk blindly. I set up the tent and went to go to bed.

The next day I woke up at dawn. Tired with little to no confidence in what I was doing and how I was going to get it done. I ended up deciding to continue walking north, toward Geraldton. I try not to get myself killed due to anything since this is the most outback you can get. So I'm already on high alert.

Pursuing a place I have no idea exists is a taunting image. As I was looking at the map it's more of a modern map and I have no idea what time period I'm in. However, the car shooting that I saw against the emus gave me a vague image in my head of what time period I was in. I've never seen that type of car before. I also don't have a clue if it's something exclusive to Australia or that hunting emus is just perfectly normal. However, I'm against the fact that in Australia, they kill a lot of emus and who in the right mind is supporting these actions? Either way, I move on, carefully and steadily trying not to get myself killed. It took all afternoon to get almost nowhere but it became night so I settled down, ate, and went to bed.

I woke up, packed my stuff, and moved on into the desert. Once again, I've spent all afternoon walking and drinking almost the last reserves of water and rations. I set up camp, ate some more but also trying to be smart by not eating the rest of my rations and water. I sat there in my tent thinking of when I can get out this dream and am I chasing a phantom? I went to bed with uneasy thoughts and stayed up trapped inside of them for a while. I woke up with the same routine, but very tired this time. I packed up, got everything sorted, and moved out. While walking in the afternoon, I saw two little black stubs in the distance moving around.

Hopefully, they were people. Coming closer to the black stubs now realizing they were people. Two of them to be exact. A boy, that seems to be in his teens, and a man, probably in his late 30s. I was surprised but happy to find people who don't have a gun pointed near me but who knows, they could easily have one.

Trusting my gut I started to follow while increasing my pace. I ended up catching up to them and they greeted me.

"Well, hello there, mate," said the man with a thick Australian accent. I didn't know how to respond to this. Should I act mute? Or should I speak to him? I took a bold move and responded to his question.

"Not much, just traveling toward a city," I said with a fake Australian accent.

"What city?" the boy asked.

"Geraldton," I responded. I could see a confused expression on the man's face.

"I've never heard Geraldton before? Where is it?"

"It's north of here," I said.

"The only thing north of here is Gerald's Town..." said the man.

"Yeah and we're heading over there to go help with building more houses." The boy responded quickly after.

We all walked together towards the supposed 'Geraldton' and we had a conversation. We ended up trading names. William was the boy and John was the father. A bit later into walking, John asked for my story or how I got here. I had to make one up because he wouldn't believe mine. I told him I got lost walking in the desert and just kept walking. Hard to believe but he ended up falling for it so I guess that's a win. It became dark so we decide to make camp and lit a fire. We ate and told stories by the fire, it was a good time. We all went to bed after the fire got blown out by the wind. Nothing else happened that night.

We woke up and packed for the exhausting walk in the desert. It took hours but we ended up seeing the town in sight and he was right. Small yet noticeable it seemed better than a tent in any shape or form. Anyhow, with the knowledge I have gathered up I took a wild guess and had to say this is definitely not the present. Maybe somewhere in the 1950s or so... I didn't really have a good clue. I asked John the question that has been in my head all day.

“Hey, you wouldn’t by any chance know what year it is right? I kind of forgot...”

“It’s 1928? No, wait. It’s.....It’s 1932.”

He took a while to respond but I eventually found my answer. Putting it all together now I was stuck in Western Australia in 1932. Thoughts rushed to my head filling it with conspiracies of time travel or even aliens. Either way, I was gonna go insane soon. Trying not to get stuck in my head I just had to remember that this was all probably a dream.

I mean, what? Really? Time travel? My job truly is turning me inside out, I thought to myself. But nothing else was adding up besides that. I, soon, just came to the conclusion that it was time travel and that I shouldn’t mess around with the idea anymore. Sadly, you can’t get something like time travel out of your head so easily. Trying to ignore the thought I just carried on, walking towards the town trying not to think of it.

We managed to get to Geraldton. It was what I expected it to be. We were greeted and it was a nice little community. Besides the few sketchy people here and there, everyone else was very nice. I was already comfortable calling this place home.

After discussing with the leader of the town, I was promised two days to stay and work. But it really depended on how much I worked and got done. Either way, it wasn’t gonna be fun but it was a nice trade for safety and shelter. I was shown around the place to each of the stations where I’ll be working. A nice introduction to the place but I was gonna stay long anyways. By the time I’ve got shown everything and being explained how everything worked it was turning night. I looked up at the sky it was beautiful. Stars everywhere you could see on the night sky. Just looking at them made me feel emotional. It was truly a wonderful sight to see.

I got to bed in worker bunks with cloth and sorts of other things on the floor and soon after regretted sleeping in there. I woke up the next morning tired, uncomfortable, and cranky. But I had to put on a happy face for today. I ate and got to work. I was assigned the task of cutting wood with some other workers. I don’t why but last night with the night sky and the stars I just kept thinking about them and wondering if it's that beautiful out in the city. After coming back to consciousness, I got to work. I tried not to socialize as I don’t know if I was gonna stay here any longer, either way, I got done what I was told. After a long day of working, I

was covered with sweat and I was sore everywhere. You couldn't blame me though I mean I was a city boy after all. I went into the bunks and laid down on my floor bed and went to bed thinking of my family and friends back home.

The next day came and a dust storm came by and so we were forced to stay inside. This is around the time when I got to meet all the workers which I was very uncomfortable with. We ended up playing cards and having a good time. I thought to myself that this is the life you know laughing, having a good time, and socializing. After a while, the storm passed so we got to work and it was as always, painful. Going to bed that night felt nice. I thought this is what it feels like to have a good life you know? Or to have a life instead of work in office spaces. I sleep like a baby that night and it was the first time in a while I got a good full night of sleep.

I woke up the next morning and felt in a good mood. I decided that I was going to leave as I wanted to see what else the world had for me. I said my goodbyes but before I went off these two guys wanted to talk to me. They both looked pretty odd but I didn't think about it. They took me behind the house and something felt off about it.

"So what you guys want?" I asked.

"Nothing....Besides everything you own," as the guy pulled out a knife.

"You're being mugged, kid. Don't say anything and everything will go by fine," said the other dude. I gave them the bag as well as other things on me that they could easily find.

"Your clothes, too," said the man with the knife.

"Really? My clothes?" I said.

"Do you want to feel this knife go into you?" Said the man in a dead tone. I proceeded to undress with only my shoes and underwear on. While this was happening I felt a weird feeling like I was gonna pass out and so I did. I woke up and I was back in the tunnel, the same as before. I saw all of my memories go the other way now back into my head pouring in. I couldn't think, I couldn't move, all I could do is watch. A white light shined at the end of the tunnel. As I was going head first into it at high speeds it was growing, bigger and bigger as I closed in on it. Now there was white everywhere and for a second I heard a voice, a very familiar voice. Samantha mumbling something I couldn't even understand it.

I woke up on the floor naked in front of my boss and the other managers. It was awkward, very awkward.

“How did this happen?” I asked. I could see how red their faces were with that confused expression as well. They told me to leave right away and to never come back. I still have no idea how this happened and wonder what my body was doing while I was in Australia. A week later after being fired for what I say the dumbest reason is hard. Being unemployed was a new thing but it meant I could go after new careers. I was happy I was gone from that job. With the free time I had, I looked up the year 1932 in Australian history and found out something. Apparently, there was a war called ‘The Great Emu War’ and I believe I was there during that time. Shocking but it still sucks that I had to watch all those emus die. It’s ingrained in my head now but I can fight it. I still wonder if it was time travel or not? I am glad it’s the present now, not the past.

Welcome to Japan

by Malia Oto

"Ok Thomas, did you manage to get your hands on a vintage 1940's suitcase?" I ask,

"Dr. Sam's project is due tomorrow and it's the last thing we need."

"Don't worry Malia, I have it right here," Thomas gestures to the suitcase in his hand as he strolls over to my table in the school library.

"It was a pain to get my hands on, but it couldn't have been any harder to get than some of the other stuff in the kit."

"You're right about that." I say,

"Almost everything in the kit was kinda a pain to get." I begin to pack things into the kit, Dr. Sam's latest assignment. We have to build a Japanese internment survival kit with everything you would need to bring if you were somehow interned. Not an easy project, and seeing how hard it was to get everything put together, maybe even my least favorite.

"Thomas, can you come over here and help me pack this up?" Thomas walks over.

"Yeah, sure thing. Is this everything we need for the kit?"

"Yup. All we need to do is pack it up into the suitcase and we'll be good to go."

"Dr. Sam better give us an A+ on this one, another B and I'll never see the light of day again." Thomas starts to fold the bedding and puts it into the case. "My mom will make sure of that."

"Yeah, same. Don't worry though, we'll get at least an A- on this one. An helped me out with some of the stuff, that practically guarantees an A, don't you think?" Thomas nods in agreement.

"Yeah, for sure at least an A." Thomas finishes folding and helps me pack the food, some dehydrated fruits, and vegetables.

"We're almost done!" I say excitedly. I pack up the final bag of dehydrated fruit and close the suitcase. "We did it!" I high-five Thomas, "Finally, we can put this project behind us."

"I know. This project was such a pain." Thomas says. "I'm glad it's finally over."

Thomas begins to walk out of the library when all of a sudden my vision starts blurring. Before I can say anything, my vision is blacked out. My senses begin to muffle until I cannot feel anything anymore.

When my senses return to me, the smell hit me. With my first breath, I was hit with the smell of wood and dust. I opened my eyes to look around. I was in what looked like a converted stable; a long, wooden room filled with cheap looking iron bed frames. The wood was rough and dirty, dusted over with sand. There was sand in the air too, clogging my lungs like the smoke from a cigarette. I continue to get my bearings. I saw the suitcase I had packed with Thomas laying a few feet beside me. A took a breath before deciding what I should do.

"Where am I?" I whispered to myself. "This doesn't look like any place I've ever been to."

There was nobody in the room with me, so I figured the first thing I should do is look around. I stood up, still a little dizzy from the events prior, my head felt like it was spinning, like I just got off a rollercoaster. I walked over to one of the iron bed frames. On this bed was a suitcase, considerable similar to mine. I picked it up and looked at it, it was brown with metal clips that fastened it shut. It was small compared to many suitcases I had seen before, it appeared just a bit larger than a briefcase. It only had one handle at the top and no wheels. It was beaten up a bit, having a few places on the edge of the case that were worn down, probably due to being bumped around a bit. Curious, I decided to take a peek inside the case. I slowly clicked each of the two fasteners back. "Click. Click." I carefully began to lift the lid of the suitcase when I heard a loud "CREAK."

"Who are you?" A demanding voice said from behind me. I spun around to see a boy, about seventeen years old, staring at me. He was a few inches taller than me, skin the same caramel brown as mine. He had shoulder length jet black hair that was a little wavy. "What are you doing in my suitcase?" I was stuck. How do you explain that you passed out and woke up here? I wasn't about to try, at least not yet.

"Um...I was... I...." I couldn't fabricate a lie fast enough.

"Put it back." He scolded.

"Put back what?" I said, confused. I hadn't moved the suitcase.

"Whatever you stole," He replied, "I don't know why you would look into my case anyway, it's not like I'm carrying anything interesting in there."

"I didn't steal anything." I realized that at this point, I didn't really have a choice. I had to

try to tell him some part of the truth. He wasn't buying it.

"I don't know where I am." I said.

"I passed out, and when I woke up, it was here. I don't know how I got here or where I managed to get to."

The boy seemed unimpressed.

"You know where you are, liar." He now said it a little louder, clearly frustrated.

"You're at Manzanar, but to be more specific, you're in my stuff."

"I'm where now?" I asked. "Like the internment camp? But Manzanar hasn't had anybody living in it since..." Wait. I looked at him.

"What year is it?"

"What?"

I spoke slower this time. "What year is it?"

"I understood your question, and it's 1943, but I have no idea how that has anything to do with you stealing my stuff." He continued to talk, but I stopped listening, my mind still running over his first statement.

"1943? 1943!" I stuttered. My mind only half understood what was going on.

"How did I not see this before? I...I've been Kindreded!" I began to pace about the room, panicked.

"I'm at Manzanar in 1943!"

I continue to pace rapidly about the room. My breathing was shallow and my heart was racing. Manzanar in 1943. Interned during WWII, and for now, I was trapped in this time. I turned to the boy.

"What's your name?"

"I'll tell you my name if you tell me yours." He snaps.

"My name is Malia Oto," I began to speak in a calm matter, he was angry enough as it is.

"Now that I have told you my name, I'd like to hear yours."

"My name...." He hesitates for a second, then continues to speak.

"....is Akira Oliva."

"Nice to meet you, Akira," I say.

"You still haven't given back what you stole, Malia. Whatever it was, I'm going to need it back."

"I didn't take anything I swear!" I say.

"You can check my pockets, you'll find nothing."

He walks over to check my pockets. I am wearing a pair of shorter shorts, ones that go far above the knee. As he checks my pockets he pulls out my wallet.

"First off, what's this?" He gestures to my wallet. He opens up my wallet and pulls everything out. He looks around in my things when his eyes are drawn to my student I.D.

"What is this? I've never seen anything like this. It says 2018-2019. What does that mean?" He throws my I.D aside onto the bed.

"Second off, these shorts are far too short. Nobody wears clothes like this, it's not proper. Besides, these pockets don't even go anywhere. Why are you wearing these? Who even makes these things? Where did you get these?"

"Ok, if I explain the shorts you aren't going to believe me," I say.

"I'm from the year 2019. These are shorts from a brand called H&M. They haven't been founded yet. These are in style in my time..." he interrupts, now more curious than angry.

"Ok, or you could have made them. How would you have even got here? Why would you come here? Internment isn't exactly a vacation."

"I don't know," I say.

"One day I was in school, the next I was here." I pause for a second.

"I think I might need your help. I can't go home, and I don't know how long I'm going to be stuck here." That part breaks me. I don't know when I'll be going home. When will I see my friends and family again? Will I see them again, or will I be stuck here, a place where I am despised for atrocities I had no hand in, hated for my heritage.

"Akira, you need to help me. Please." I beg him. Going home is my number one priority, and Akira's help could be so helpful. I wasn't going to risk it, I couldn't risk it. I began to feel hot, salty tears stream down my face. The thought of never going home again, it felt like I ate a stone, weighing me down and making me sick.

"I'll help you out," Akira speaks in a calm voice.

"It's tough here as it is, and not knowing your way around would only make it more dangerous. Just promise to stick with me, keep me safe, keep my family safe. Do whatever you can to keep us safe. You are from the future after all."

"What?" I exclaim.

"Why would I be able to keep you safe? I'm not from this time remember?"

"It doesn't matter. You just have to do whatever you can to keep me safe. In exchange, I'll help you figure things out here." He said.

"First, you need to change out of what you're wearing. That's gotta go."

"I have some clothes in my bag that should work. All from this time period."

"Good. Change into those."

"Ok, anything else I should do?" I ask.

"It's getting late."

"Everyone else is eating dinner at the mess hall. I snuck out, and then I found you. Dinner should be done soon. In the meantime, you need to get ready. I'm going to go out again, in the meantime, you change clothes."

"Ok, I..." I say, but by then he had already left. I quickly change clothes, afraid someone would walk in on me. I take off my watch but keep my necklace on. It means too much for me to take it off, reminds me too much of home. I brush away the thought, the homesickness is going to be too much to bear. I open my suitcase and fumble around. I grab some freeze-dried fruit, a snack I packed in my kit for its long lasting potential. I snack on a few, rationing out my supply. It scares me, I didn't really know how long I was going to be trapped here.

As I pack up my suitcase, I hear the door open. I turn around. Akira walks in with another group of people. The group of people consists of a middle-aged woman, maybe thirty or forty years old. There are two young adults, a boy, and a girl, both a little older than Akira. Finally, there are two young children, one was maybe four or five, the other maybe two or three. All Japanese. *His family...* I didn't really have time to hide anywhere. They notice me, and they stare at me, unsure of what to make of the situation. Finally, the silence was broken.

"Hello! What's your name?" A small, yet excited voice speaks out. It was the voice of the

second youngest child, the five-year-old.

“My name is Hana!” She is so excited, and blissfully ignorant of the rest of the family, who were standing there quietly.

“My name is Malia,” I say.

“I...” I stutter. I need to come up with a hasty lie, one that was somewhat believable too. “....I am from another family. My dad was the only one who came with me to the camp, and he has joined the war. They moved me here, didn’t want me to be alone.” I pray that my lie was believable. I was so nervous, my stomach felt weighed and my legs felt flimsy.

Everyone looked away, except for Hana. She was intrigued.

“Nice to meet you, Ms. Malia!” She exclaim. “Meet the rest of my family! I’ll show you, I’ll even tell you their names!” Before Hana was able to do that though she was interrupted by the older woman. She spoke in rapid-fire Japanese to Akira. Akira nods in my general direction, to who I assume was his mother and then proceeded to translate for her.

“My mom says that’s it’s nice to meet you. She says that you can stay in that bed over there.” He points to a bed on the far end of the barrack.

“Tell your mom I appreciate the gesture,” I say. Akira turned to his mother and speaks with her, his Japanese almost as good as his mothers.

“She says that it’s no problem, we must do what we must to maintain our humanity. It’s one of the few things we can keep, they have taken almost everything else.” He says. I didn’t have a response. Everything went silent for what felt like the longest ten seconds.

Akira breaks the silence. “Just get your stuff and set up your bed. I’ll see you in the morning.” He translates to his mother who nods. Akira’s mother said a quick sentence in Japanese. Quickly, everyone begins to shuffle to their respective beds. I follow and walk over to my bed. Once everyone was asleep, the single flickering light bulb that lit the barack after dark was switched off. Akira’s mother muttered a Japanese word to her children before all fell silent in the barack, everyone fast asleep.

When I woke up, I was falling. I had hit the floor. Hard. Everything was hazy, but I began to recognize my surroundings. The school library? Suddenly I heard a loud voice. “Malia!

Are you ok?" Thomas.

"Thomas, is that you?" I ask.

"Yeah, it's me. What happened? You were out for a fat minute there. Do you need to go see the nurse? You were just sitting there then you passed out and fell off the chair. You hit your head pretty hard."

"I don't really know what happened Thomas," I answer. "One minute I was here and the next..." I couldn't tell him what happened. He'd think I was crazy, and considering I had just passed out, I'd probably think the same. "...I was on the floor."

"Are you sure you don't want to go to the nurse? She could help you out." He says. I thought about his proposal for a second. Maybe it was best I see the nurse, seeing as I just passed out. Maybe she could help me sort out what could have just been the craziest fever dream I've ever had.

"Sure Thomas. Yeah, that's a good idea, thanks."

"No problem Malia, I'll help you over to nurse Iverson's office. I'll let Dr. Sam know what happened."

Thomas drops me off right down the hall from the nurse's office.

"Sorry, Malia. I've got to go to class. Just let me know if you need anything."

"Thank you, Thomas. I'll be sure to let you know if I need anything."

Thomas waved goodbye, then darted off to class. Once he left I began to wonder. Was it all a dream. No, it couldn't have been, I was there. Everything felt so real, so vivid, like I could touch everything, feel everything. A dream feels unreal and supernatural. This though, this felt so real, so detailed, I can't write it off as a merely misguided nightmare. *I'd have to check, verify my worst fear, that I had traveled back in time to Japanese Internment*, I think to myself.

"The library! They had a TON of information about Manzanar when it came to the survival kit project. Maybe they will have records on those interned at the camp. That way we can see if Akira is there. If he is, I'm not crazy, proof that I have traveled back in time."

I quickly get up and dash over to the library across the street from school I speed into the library and dart over to the WWII section. The WWII section was massive, consisting of all

sorts of history textbooks, photos, and records. The shelves are nearly double my height, which isn't saying much considering the fact that I'm 4'11. The books are all lined up organized by event, yet still somehow maintaining an unorganized look. The air smells of old yellow paper, the dusty kind that clogs your nose.

I begin to browse the shelves for the Japanese Internment section. The WWII section is organized by year, so finding what I was looking for shouldn't be hard. I just had to find the records for the year I traveled back to. Simple.

"1943, 1943, 1943!" I grow excited when I found the year. Now just to find the Manzanar records.

"Here they are, under the internment section!" I quickly scan the section for the records. Right in the center of the section was a folder titled, *Copy of the Manzanar American Relocation Center's Housing Records*.

"There!" I whisper-yell. I grab the thick manilla folder and ran over to a nearby table. I throw the folder down and open to it, greeted first by a cloud of dust.

Once the cloud dissipates, I open up the folder. In it was a list of names, their dates of birth, a deceased marker, their sex, and their "status" in the camp. Employed, Unemployed, and Drafted. I began to search for Akira's name. The list of names was vast, so many untold stories. It put a pit in my stomach, all the lives that were destroyed. I thought to myself,

Then let's try to help one of the few lives I can. If I can, that is. This was the second of my sad realizations. What if Akira was real, and I can't save him? Can't go back? What then? Didn't matter. Whatever I could do, I had to do it. Whatever I could for the one family I might be able to save. I began to search faster, eyes rolling down the page faster than the speed of sound until...

Akira Oliva the page reads. My heart sinks. I read further down the page. *Hana Oliva* I looked for all six of the members of the Oliva family that I stayed with. The first names on the list were the names of the two older siblings *Jeffery Oliva and Amy Oliva*. Down the list after them was Akira's name and Hana's name. After them was the name of the youngest child *Sakura*. Finally on the list was who I presume to be the mother based on the date of birth and sex. The name read *June Oliva*. I look down. There was one more name left on the Oliva section.

Shigeru Oliva. Akira's Father most likely... It had to be, judging by the age he was too old to be his brother, and too young to be his grandfather. I look at the status. *Drafted*.

"Oh no, no wonder they had an empty bed for me to use in their barrack. I should've known. Why else?" My heart sunk for Akira and his family. Fatherless. I shut the folder. I found the information I needed and a bit more, regardless of whether I wanted to or not. I need to know though, what happened to Akira? Now knowing he was real, no dream, no trick, I had to figure out what happened to him. I threw the 1943 records back in the shelf and grabbed the 1944 folder. I opened it up to the page containing the Oliva families names. I scanned the page for Akira's name.

"There," I say as I read over his name. Then his status.

Drafted.

Akira had been drafted into the war. I looked for his father's name, was he still at war? I found the name Shigeru and saw what I had most feared. A deceased marker, marking the death of Akira's father. Tears welled up in my eyes.

I return this folder and grab the 1945 folder, and open it up to the Oliva family page. I just had to make sure, was Akira still alive? I find his name, a deceased marker next to it. My brain just stopped functioning for a split second.

Akira was going to die. Die young, die serving the country that fought against him. Die a hero. Die a hero the world would fail to see, left unwritten in textbooks detailing this very event in history. Forgotten. Forever.

I slide the records back into their spot in the shelves somberly. I begin to walk out of the library, eyes watery and heart feeling empty. As I approach the door to the library, my vision begin to black out, my senses being smothered. I know what this means, if it was going to be anything like last time, I might be able to save Akira. I fell over and blacked out.

I wake up in the bed I fell asleep in. 1943. I look around, everyone was waking up. Akira was getting out of his bed and walking over.

"Get up, it's breakfast time." He says. The sight of his face left a pit in my stomach. I keep a poker face, he couldn't know. He couldn't know what I know about his dad, couldn't

know I know when and how he would die. I have to keep him in the dark.

“Ok, I’ll change,” I respond. I get out of bed and carefully make my bed, just as everyone else in the barrack is doing. I change my clothing, the day is hotter than the night. I adorne a 1940’s dress, the hemline below the knees. I have shoes for the period as well but didn’t put them on, per Japanese custom. My shoes lays neatly by the bed. I grab them and then head for the door with the rest of the family.

We went over to the mess hall for breakfast, and we ate what we could. Akira joined his older siblings at another table with other people around the same age. The two younger children, Hana and Sakura, stayed with their mother. I decided to stay with Hana, she seemed the most approachable and seeing as I didn’t know the ropes, this would be far safer than trying to talk with Akira’s friends.

Once we get our food, Hana begins to talk to me.

“What’s your name again Miss?”

“Malia,” I say. “And your name is Hana.”

“Yep! You remembered!”

“Of course, how could I forget?” I joke.

“Why are you in our barrack again? I don’t care why but I just can’t remember.”

I recall the lie I had told the previous night. “My father was drafted, and he was the only one with me. Once I was alone, they moved me in with you.”

Hana responds. “Just like my dad? Mama told me he got drafted for the war. She said he’s a big hero. Is that true Malia?”

“Of course Hana,” I say. She seems so unphased by the draft, I highly doubt the rest of the family was the same. She is just too young to understand. I almost envy her.

Once breakfast was over, the day flew by. Akira showed me the basketball courts, the communal washroom, and the perimeter line of the camp.

“Don’t get to close or you’ll get shot.” He joked. I had a feeling his joke was more of a warning, we were not welcome, even in the place they had forced us to call home.

After the day closed, we return to the mess hall for our final meal. Afterward, we went back to the barrack. I take off my shoes and walk over to my bed. My eyes feel the pull of

gravity, my exhaustion really kicking in. I immediately change into warmer clothes for the night, then fall asleep.

The days flew by like this. Every day was a routine, but we managed to spice it up with things like basketball. I wasn't very good, but I was getting the hang of things at Manzanar, the customs, the people, the DOs and the DON'Ts. Everything was going as per the usual. Nothing changes, the days are the same. I would lose track if I wasn't counting, they almost blend together. I felt like a robot, losing a little more of my humanity as the days went on. One day, this autonomous pattern would change.

As far as I could tell it was the beginning of 1944. It was freezing outside, the slightest wind made it feel like your nose was going to fall off, the air drying out your skin and freezing it all at once. I had bundled up into my thickest clothing, just enough to prevent hypothermia and grant mild comfort. I had woken up as per the usual, and I made my way down to the mess hall.

It wasn't until I got there that I realized something was wrong. Akira runs over to me, his eyes and mind racing. He seems distraught, his facial was that of someone who had just heard something they'd rather not hear.

"The Draft," He says. "They reinstated the draft."

"The Draft? Will you have to...."

"I'm eighteen. I'm old enough." He says. "And I have received official orders to report for a physical examination. I'm going to join the war."

I realize what this meant. This was the beginning of the end for Akira. The war wasn't going to be kind to him. He would end up dead, just like his father. I have to stop him from being inducted into the army.

"Do you want to join the war?" I ask.

"Doesn't matter if I want to, I have to." He respond solemnly. "No matter what I do, I have to serve the country I am loyal to. No matter what they say."

I have to convince him to stay somehow. I have to keep him safe. Just like I promised him many nights ago when I first met him.

"Akira, you could die. Your family needs you. You should stay behind."

"I already told you, Malia, I can't. Besides, who said I didn't want to fight in the war. I'd love to prove everyone wrong. Show the world that I'm an American. Show them I always was, and always will be loyal to my country."

"But Akira," I retort. "Your family needs you."

"No, they don't. They have Jeff and Amy. Mom has done well on her own forever. They won't even notice that I'm gone." He says sternly.

"But Akira....."

"No more 'buts' Malia. I'm going to fight in the war, no matter what you say." He says the last sentence a little louder, emphasizing every word. He begins to walk off, back to the mess hall. I have to stop him. I have to keep him safe, keep him alive. I need to do the one thing most advised against in time travel. Change history. I need to change history to save a friend, save a family, from being forgotten under the sea of events, never to be read about in textbooks, never to be heard about or seen again beyond the few records left in the dustiest shelves of the library.

I decide to say the one thing, the last thing I wanted to say to him. I yell to him, yell words I never wanted to hear, never wanted to say.

"You are going to end up just like your father Akira."

He turned around, appalled. He couldn't believe it.

"What did you just say to me, Malia?" He threatens me.

"I said, you are going to end up just like your father."

"What about my father?" He snarls.

"Dead, just like your father." My own words were breaking my heart, but before they could, a teary-eyed Akira slammed his fist into my face. The skin around his fist burned. My head felt like it was an earthquake, my brain slamming around my skull as I fell onto the cold hard ground. As I lay on the ground my vision began blur, my senses clogging up. The last words I heard were from Akira.

"I don't know how you knew about my father, I never told you anything, but even then, if he were here, I doubt he would have wanted, or cared for that matter, to meet you." Then I black out.

I wake up on the library floor. No one is there. I get up. I feel lightheaded, like Sleeping Beauty, waking up from a lengthy slumber. But time hadn't passed. Not in this world anyway. I begin to walk around the library, attempting to regain my bearings. Tears are still in my eyes from that fateful encounter with Akira, my jaw feeling phantom pains, the ghost of a punch. Once my vision begin to refocus, my mind becomes clear. I need to find the records. I need to know if what I did worked.

"The records! I need to find them." I say under my breath. I dash over to the internment section and grab the folders for 1944 and 1945. "Come on Akira, stay alive." I flip open the folders to the Oliva family's page. My eyes scans quickly down the page to Akira's name.

"Employed" Read the 1944 document. He resisted the draft. I grab the 1945 records. I as so nervous I almost puked. I open the folder.

There wasn't a deceased marker. He stayed alive. There was a note on the side of the page. *"Imprisoned for resisting the Draft of the Japanese for the WWII efforts."* Imprisoned. Akira went to prison for resisting the draft. But it was better than dead.

I saved him! I saved Akira. I have to tell Thomas about what happened.

Thomas. I have to find Thomas. I run down the hall to his class. He is in Spanish class, it is just down the hall from the nurses. I feel like I was going to puke, but I had to tell Thomas what had happened. He is my best friend after all. I should have told him about Akira the first time I passed out.

When I got to the classroom, I barge in the door. I look around the room. Thomas isn't there. The restroom maybe? Maybe I should ask Ms. Silva, the Spanish teacher. I walk over to his desk.

"Mr. Silva, do you know where Thomas is?"

"Thomas?" He ask. "I don't know a Thomas, are you sure he's in this class?"

I look around. I recognize his classmates, but none were him.

"Yes, I'm pretty sure."

"Well, I've never met a Thomas. I have the sneaking suspicion you may be mistaken. Go ask the front desk, I don't think they know a Thomas either."

I was starting to get nervous? Did something happen to Thomas while I was gone? Did time pass while I was at Manzanar? I couldn't tell. All I could do was visit the front desk for more information.

"Thank you, Mr. Silva. I'll check with admissions at the front desk."

I dash out of the classroom and bolt to the front desk. I sprint around corners, narrowly missing a few walls. It didn't matter. I have to find my friend. Occasionally I would call out his name while running, to no avail. Soon I reach the front desk.

"Do you know where Thomas is?" I ask, panting.

"Thomas? I don't know a Thomas, is he in your grade?"

"Freshman, yeah. His name is Thomas Peterson. I need to find him."

"I can look up his record, see what class he should be in, would that help?"

"Yes! Thank you! I need to find him for... a project." I lie. I don't think time travel is a viable reason to search the database. A school thing though, they would have to help me right?

"I looked up Thomas Peterson." She says. "Nothing came up. Are you sure that's his name?"

I was riveted. He isn't here. I knew his name we'd been friends forever. There was no way unless... *no! There was no way. It couldn't be.* I run to the bathroom, tears streaming down my face, realizing what I had done.

I had made a mistake. I erased Thomas from history. I played with the past, and by keeping my promise to Akira, keeping him safe, I fear I may have erased the existence of my best friend.

Creation and Catastrophe of 1948

by Rami Dally

I woke up abruptly from my dream with my head throbbing in pain. I reached over to turn on my bedside lamp. When I flicked the lamp on the bright LED lamp shined in my face. I got out of my bed and shut my eyes to try to get my mind off of the pain. I focused on the noise of the ocean waves breaking against the cliffs near my house, an airplane took off from the airport. I hate the Point Loma because of airplanes taking off into the dark skies of the night. My headache got worse. As I got up from bed the springs coiled up and creaked. I started to walk towards the door. I walked across the wood flooring towards my door, as I reached to turn the handle, I fell down and lost consciousness.

I woke up in a house the scent of bread baking and rose water filled my nose. The scent reminded me of visiting my family in Palestine during the summer. Sunlight shined through a small window above a sink, instead of being in my bedroom I was standing inside the kitchen, instead of the wood flooring in my house, there was tile. Instead of the airplane noises, far in the distance, I heard a mosque speakers sound off.

In the kitchen was freshly baked bread on a tray. I walked around the house exploring the rooms and looking for someone who could explain where I was. The house was small, the walls looked like they were worn down by age, hallways with arches that had stone eroding, wood rotting, definitely not an ideal living space. I couldn't find anyone. It seemed as though the only inhabitants of the house were fruit flies, large ants, and spiders.

There was a large window and inside it looked like it would be more accessible than the tiny one in the kitchen. I walked towards the window outside were clotheslines with clothing hanging from it. That was a good sign that someone must live in this house, possibly a person that could explain where I was. Across from the building I was in, there was an apartment building about four stories tall.

I looked out below me. I was in a similar apartment like the building may be on the second story. I could see armored vehicles and military personnel dressed in a khaki clothing carrying guns, males and females.

I opened the door of the house and walked down a stone staircase. The staircase was falling apart, with uneven steps and without a railing. At the bottom of the stairs, there was an

open stone archway. The moment I made it to the bottom of the stairs it felt as though the temperature increased by 100 degrees. The air was stiff and dry. I started sweating and felt very dehydrated. As I exited the building one of the soldiers spotted me. Old World War II submachine guns were drawn and pointed at me. I nearly swallowed my heart as I slowly raised my hands. The soldiers started shouting at me in what sounded like Hebrew.

I grew up hearing my parents speak Hebrew, I picked up very little from my parents. I learned how to say basic things such as, "Hello," "How are you?" "Thank you," and "You are welcome." However, I could not pick up enough to understand what these soldiers were saying.

I was sure this was it. This was how it was going to end. I shut my eyes preparing for one of the soldiers to shoot me. Rather than shooting, a soldier kicked me in the stomach. I fell to the dirt. Another one started laughing. I opened my eyes and the one that had kicked me then spat in my face. Then he picked me up, grabbed me by my shirt, put a bag over my head and dragged me for hours.

Finally, he stopped he removed the bag and nudged me with the barrel of his rifle. In front of me was a field of olive trees. He yelled something in Hebrew and hit me again. I started running into the olive fields as fast as my legs could carry me. Tree branches scraped and cut me. I heard gunshots behind me, I ran faster. Something flew in front of me and the noise of glass shattering filled my ears. I looked in the direction the noise was coming from attempting to avoid it, the scent of smoke filled my nose and then a fire engulfed the field I was in, I tripped and fell hitting a cactus.

My headache came back, this time worse I spat blood onto the dirt floor, I looked at my arms and they had cuts all over them. I removed a few splinters before I started to lose consciousness again.

In the distance, I hear voices, "Rami... Rami... Rami!" It sounded like my mom's voice.

I woke up, laying in my bed and my mom sat on the couch in my room. My dog Luna rested by the Palestinian Keffiyeh at the foot of my bed. I sat up my headache was gone but the cuts and splinters on my arms weren't. I looked at my mom, she had rushed over to my bed when she saw me sit up.

“Rami, what happened!?” asked my mom with a concerned voice. I told her everything about the house, the soldiers. My dad also came to listen to the story.

“I know, I know it sounds like I’m making this up. But I am telling the truth!”

“Rami, we believe you!” replied my Dad. My mom looked concerned,

“I’ll be back, you rest Rami.” she said.

I tried to rest, but I couldn’t. I was afraid, afraid of going back to where ever I was. I hear my moms car engine start. I get up from the bed and run across to my window that overlooks the street, I watch my her car speed away. I go back to bed and pondering where could she be going?

After a few hours of sleeping, I wake up to my mom in my room calling my name,

“Rami... Rami!” She was holding a book in her hand, one that we have on the coffee table titled, Israel 1948. She opens it,

“I think this is where you were, you must’ve been in Palestine during 1948! I can’t explain much but I need you to listen! If you end up going back I need you to carry this with you.” She opened a backpack and started pulling items out of it.

My mom pulled out a bottle of pills, labeled Scripps Mercy Pharmacy,

“These are antibiotics. Zionists injected Typhoid into Akko’s water supply which supplied most of the north if you need to drink water make sure to take these antibiotics.”

She also pulled out a life straw and a brown colored plastic bag. The bag had big black bold letters for the labeling, MRE. Meals Ready to Eat. I have also heard them being called Meals Refused by Everyone. Also, Meals Refusing to Exit, a lot of funny names. Next, she pulled out a druze prayer cap,

“During 1948 druze lived in villages in Palestine although Israelis did not bother them since they kept a neutral political standpoint.”

Next, she pulled out a bottle of sunscreen, vaseline, crumpled up money with the title in Arabic reading Palestinian Dinar, a pocket knife, and a thin kevlar vest.

“Rami, I need you to wear this below your shirt at all times.” My mom said with a very serious voice.

She hands me the backpack, I put on the kevlar vest and put on the prayer cap. I hug the backpack as tight as possible as I fall back asleep. Hours later I wake up my headache was back. This time I knew what to do, I got out of bed and put the backpack on. I clenched my fists and shut my eyes. Seconds later, I lost consciousness.

I woke up in the same kitchen. This time a lady was getting food out on a table. She turned around and started walking to the kitchen, she spotted me. She screeched loudly with a squeaky voice. Then she started yelling in Arabic. A young boy, maybe 13 years old, ran to the kitchen, "Who are you!" he screams in Arabic.

I reply, "My name is Rami Dally, I just ran in here trying to hide from the soldiers!"

They pause and look at me confused.

"What was your last name?" the women asked.

"Dally." I replied.

"My name is, Faizeh Dally. This is Sadiq Dally he is my son, there are no other Dally families around here, you are lying!"

I realized what was going on, I was sent back in time to my family! I slowly explained everything as best as I could. Explaining that I live in America, I was born in 2003. I was sent back in time and can't control it.

"How do we know this is true?" asked Faizeh. I dug into my bag and pulled out the bottle of pills and showed her the date on them.

"You can not tell anyone, I will protect you as best as I can as long as you promise not to tell anyone!" I said.

"It's between us!" Faizeh replied.

Without any warning, the front door slammed open and soldiers stormed into the house with guns drawn, shouting. Three soldiers tackled me and carried me down the stairs. At the bottom of the stairs, they threw me to the floor and aimed their guns at me. One of the soldiers pointed at a armoured vehicle and they started kicking me. I started towards the vehicle, my ribs sore from the kicking.

The armored vehicle had a design like modern SWAT truck, with the driver seats separated from the back. Inside the vehicle were other Palestinians, women, young kids crying, and angry fathers. There were no soldiers in the back. I entered the vehicle after one of the soldiers hit me in the back with the butt of their rifle. I looked for Sadiq and Faizeh. They were nowhere to be found. I was scared where were we going, when was I going to go back to my time.

Shortly after I was in the vehicle more soldiers came and brought Faizeh and Sadiq. They shut the doors and the engine to the vehicle started. It was loud and sounded like a helicopter, the road was rough, we were getting thrown around everywhere. It seemed like a long time but I couldn't tell how long we were driving for. Possibly four hours, maybe six.

Without a warning the driver swerved. The car spun out of control and moments later we flipped we were on the ceiling my breath was taken away, I couldn't even breath.

It took awhile for me to realize what happened. I got up and I went to the door of the car trying not to step on anyone. I tried as hard as I can to push the door open but it wouldn't budge. It possibly locked from the outside. Although there was a window on the door, if I could break that open somehow, maybe I'll be able to unlock the car and start helping everyone else.

I reached into my backpack and find the pocket knife, on the back of the knife there was a window breaker. I took it and hit the window glass shatters, I crawled through and made it to the back of the car. I grabbed the handle to the door and open it. People started getting out, everyone was scared and crying some people were seriously injured. Sadiq stepped out of the car he was fine, and so was Faizeh.

"The Zionists still haven't exited the vehicle. " said Sadiq.

"Good hopefully they don't and if they do we need to get out of here before then!" I replied.

"But where are we?" asked Faizeh.

There was a small stone wall that seemed to stretch out for miles. On the wall there was a sign that read,

"STOP! Lebanese Border!"

"We are at the Lebanese border." I replied.

"Where do we go from here?" asked Sadiq in a very concerned voice.

"I think I have an idea." I replied. I reached into my backpack and pulled out the book that my mom packed. I flipped a couple pages through until I reached a page with a map. I pointed to the village I visit during the summer.

"Kfar Yasif, it should be about 20 km from here." I said.

"How long do you think it will take us to make it there?" asked Sadiq.

"Let's try to make it before the end of the day." I replied.

"Let's go!" I said. We started the long hike. The sun beat down on our back, the dry weather started to make me very thirsty, my throat was so dry my tongue felt like sandpaper, I felt like I couldn't swallow the little water that was in my mouth. We were only a couple hours into the hike and the sun was starting to set.

"I'm hungry." said Sadiq.

"Okay, let's rest for a bit and eat." I replied. I took off my backpack and pulled out one of the MRE's. I tore off the water proof plastic and opened the box. I pulled out three chicken burrito bowl MRE's and handed them to Sadiq and Faizeh. I explained that it was food from the US. However, we were still short on water.

"Wait here I need to go get water." I said.

I put on the druze cap that way I don't seem suspicious. I walked about a mile south until I made it to a village called Nes Ammim where I found a store and bought water. Shortly later I made it back to Sadiq and Faizeh. After we ate we started walking again. About one hour later we saw a sign that said Kfar Yasif. We made it, finally. As we walked into the village my headache started coming back, this time it was worse than ever. It felt as though a vise had been squeezing my temple.

"Sadiq, Faizeh, I think I am going back to my time... before I leave... take this." I pulled out the crumpled up Palestinian Dinar and barely handed it to them.

"Thank you!" Sadiq said in an increasingly muffled voice. Before I could respond, my vision blurred out, I fell down and lost consciousness.

This time I didn't wake up in my bed, I woke up standing on a familiar dirt road, to the right of me was my uncle Ameen's house, below it was my grandfather and grandmothers

house, although now it is empty and it is where I live when I visit Palestine during the summer.
To the left of it, was my uncle Sliman's house.

Escaping the Việt Cộng

by An Tran

I always figured the stories about the Vietnam War were merely interesting remnants of my family's past, never did I think I would be a part of it.

The day started out like usual: brushing my teeth, eating the breakfast my mom cooked and left out early in the morning. She cooked the rice perfectly today; it was soft, but not too soft, and still warm from the cooker. It was slightly sweet, and the warmth made it feel like it was melting in my mouth.

I wore the comfiest cotton t-shirt I owned, cream-colored, and some knee-length shorts. The weather in San Diego changes way too frequently for me to wear thick sweatpants or booty-shorts. I was more productive than usual with cleaning my room and organizing the clothes laying in the bin. The laundry was fresh and smelling of lavender, warm to the touch. That was the extent of my memory before I found myself laying on the concrete floor in the hot sun.

“Con nhỏ đó là con của ai vậy?”

I heard people whispering around me.

Are they referring to me? I thought, Why are they asking whose kid I am? Why am I lying on the ground?

“Ôi bà ơi, mình nên giúp nó không?”

“Ừ, đỡ nó vô nhà đi.”

The majority of my life up to this point has been spent living in Vietnam, so it was no surprise to me when I realized that I was no longer in the comfort of my own home, or even in the US.

I continued to lay on the hot ground, motionless and bewildered. I could feel the burning ground blistering my back. *This is what being cooked alive must feel like*, I thought. After much effort and bickering from the ladies about how they would help me into the house, I was assisted into the small house raised a foot or two above the ground. My body was numb and lifeless, yet my brain was whirring with countless questions. I could hear the revving engines of the motorbikes and the dogs barking excessively. It sounds exactly like it did during my summer trip back this summer. *Is it still summer? Did I dream of flying back to the US? Did I*

actually leave Vietnam at the end of summer? It really did feel like a lucid dream, but a long, continuous one with no end.

I was able to sit up by exerting all my strength into the task and regained the ability to move around quickly. *That's strange. I was just struggling to move an inch just seconds ago.* Snapping out of my ponderings, I noticed that the two ladies were staring at me, sitting on the other ends of the wooden board, which I could assume was the bed. Both women were small and the orange hue of the sun wash over the hollows of their cheekbones and gave shadows to the rest of their face, making them looking ominous.

“Cháu là ai vậy? Tại sao cháu nằm giữa đường?”

Even with my limited knowledge of the Vietnamese language, I could understand what they had said, “Who are you? Why were you laying on the ground?”

I struggled for a few minutes looking for words to respond with, *I should have listened to Dad when he said I should read more of the books grandma sent from Vietnam to retain my reading and speaking skills*, I thought.

“Con là Bảo Ân. Con cũng không có nhớ tại sao con lại nằm giữa đường. Con không biết con đang ở đâu...”

I did pretty well explaining my situation, not that there was much to explain. I looked at the slightly taller woman and could feel palpable tension in the room between the ladies as if they were conflicted to tell me something.

“Cô là ai?” I asked who she was, trying to break the silence.

One of them spoke, “Cô tên là Quỳnh Anh. Còn cô này tên là Tâm.”

She introduced herself as Quỳnh Anh, and the other lady as Tâm. We sat in silence for a while, before Tâm got up and handed me a colorful plastic cup with water. Outside, the vibrant sun disappears over the horizon and the starry night creeps in, cold and windy.

Over dinner, our conversations were limited to discussing my personal information, such as how old I am, who my parents are and theories of how I ended up on the street, unable to move. I was surprised they never came to ask me about my clothes. There was a clear difference between the clothes they were wearing and the clothes I was wearing, but I guess they had just decided to ignore it for the time being. I noticed during the dinner, however,

Quỳnh Anh and Tâm gave me more food than they had to give. The meal was scarce, with rice drier than what I was used to and a bowl, the size of a small cup, of pulled beef. It wasn't like the beef I eat at home; it was seasoned perfectly but rather thin and stiff, slightly similar to eating soft rubber. The calendar on the wall read *ngày 27 tháng 4, năm 1975*. 4/27/1975.... It didn't surprise me, but I was still afraid, and the dried rice slid slowly down my throat. The fear and panic was churning in my stomach, thick and gross like milk turning into butter.

Quỳnh Anh seemed to have understood my facial expression.

“Thời này hơi khó. Đồ ăn thì không có, quần áo thì dơ. Không có ai có gì để ăn để uống. Sài Gòn bây giờ trở thành một cái ổ chuột.”

Of course there is no food and of course, everybody's clothes are raggedy! IT'S THE VIETNAM WAR, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE! I panicked quietly in my head, baffled at Anh's blatant statement about the terrible conditions of the war. *HOW DO I STAY ALIVE? WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?!?*

I was more worried with the knowledge that in just less than three days, Saigon will have fell under Northern Vietnam forces and the communists will take over. Just the thought made my skin crawl with anger and fear, goosebumps cover most of my arm. Quỳnh Anh and Tâm exchanged looks with each other before one of them told me their plans to leave the country and whether I would join them. They were to, somehow, catch a boat to seek refuge in another country. *This is insane*. I made the choice to come with, knowing that staying is not an option. Knowing the tales of pirate attacks and getting caught by the communists from my grandparents, who attempted to escape by boats many times, did not help ease my troubles. Tâm told me more in-depth of their plans, amazing me with their generosity to take me with them, as I have heard stories of the Vietnamese refugees leaving loved ones behind and leaving silently.

That night, I slept on the wooden bed with a thin blanket. I stared at the moldy, cream-colored ceiling. It wasn't cold, but I shuddered at the idea of what lies ahead.

I was woken up by Tâm, who told me to go to the back and wash my face. I set foot on the cool marble floor and proceed to head to the back, where Anh was sitting to brush her teeth. Besides her was a tub of water, which I used to wash my face. The refreshing water

reminded me of getting ready for school every morning, *let's just hope I stay alive long enough to get back and go to school.* I changed into the clothes I had packed before and went on with my day.

The entire day was spent preparing for the trip. I was tasked with making sure we have enough food for several days. It was a small portion of rice stuffed in a tin can, topped with a three measly dried caramelized shrimps. I chuckled in my head, finding the situation amusing and pitiful at the same time. Tâm gave me a grocery handbag made of plastic and told me to stuff it full of the cans of food I had packed. While I was working, Anh was packing clothes that looked like square patches of cloth into a cotton bag and tied it to a stick. She, then, took my plastic handbag and secured it to the other end. Tâm packed in a rectangular cardboard box all the essential documents she had and wrapped a plastic string several times over it. As I was pouring water in some extra plastic containers we had, my vision became dark and I could not move.

I was on top of something warm. *A pile of clothes. I must be back.* I laid there for several minutes before gaining full control over my body. *No, I must have fallen asleep. That can't have been real because I am here right now. Why would I be in Vietnam in 1975?* I shook away the thought and continue folding clothes. *But the experience was too real. How could I have been dreaming if I could feel the hot concrete ground? And how could I have made up that whole situation? No. It couldn't have been real. But... what if it was real? That means I could faint or whatever, and get sent back at any given point. What if it was real?* No matter how hard I tried to stop thinking about it, it kept coming back to me. *It would be safer to be ready, just in case,* I thought.

Keep it simple. It might not be real. But it could be... so what would I need? I began pacing around the house, searching for anything that might be useful. *It would be hours before Mom and Dad get home from work and I'm pretty sure only 15 minutes have passed during that "thing."* I rummaged through a messy drawer beneath the TV. *Aha! A first-aid kit. Small enough, right? And yes! A Swiss Army knife.* I took several old, white T-Shirts and sewed them together

to create the cotton rag bag that Anh had. The first-aid kit and Swiss Army knife were set down in the middle, and several feminine pads were dropped in as well.

Some simple blouses and cotton pants were folded in neatly, and next to them were as many granola bars, beef jerky packets, a small plastic bag of uncooked rice and an assortment of canned foods. *And just my luck...* I found several bills of Vietnamese money, most likely left from our trip to Vietnam this summer that haven't been exchanged back. Even better, my brother had just gone on a retreat in the deep forest, which required him to bring a portable water filter. He had just returned days before and left it on the coffee table. I tied the bag together, just like I had seen Anh do it. *Not too heavy. I can carry this easily.* As I reached for the money to hide in my pocket, my vision blacked out before I could grab it. I went numb.

I stared at the familiar ceiling that I had been staring at just the night before.

Anh was sitting beside me, looking concerned. "Cháu có sao không? Cô nhìn qua thì cháu tự nhiên biến mất, rồi xong biến ra lại ở giữa nhà, nên cô Tâm và cô đỡ con lên giường nằm. Cô sợ cháu là một con ma, nhưng...."

So it is real. This is all real. To Anh, I suddenly disappear and appear in another spot. To me, it's loss of vision and going numb. And during that time, I can't do anything. And I might have scared the only person that could help me survive here into thinking I am a ghost. Great. I sat up and looked around.

The bag I had packed sat next to me.

She asked, "Trong đó có gì vậy?"

In response, I showed her all the things inside my bag and explained what they are. I took the courage to tell her more as to where I came from, more specifically, what time period I am from. It was a foolish idea to tell a stranger you had just met about your time-traveling abilities, but Anh had a welcoming and warm personality, I couldn't help but confide in her. She took everything with a grain of salt, asking me questions such as how that is possible and how can she know I am not lying. I told her as much as I could without telling her anything that could affect how history plays out. *I can't play God, I am not supposed to alter the course of humanity.*

We continued talking about what is going on for a while, before realizing we still had work to do. Tâm came back with two small loaves of bread, *bánh mì*, which is stuffed with ham, various vegetables and coated with *paté*. She split one up for three of us to eat for dinner and saved another one in a paper wrap. Final preparations were made after dinner and we discussed our plans to get to the coastal area. We were to take a flight out, tickets were already bought and then stay at a relative's house. I would be introduced as Anh's niece.

The next few hours went faster than a bullet. We all slept together on the wooden bed with all our belongings packed and ready to go. I awoke before the break of dawn and washed my face in the tub. And with that, we were out the door, hastily heading to the airport to go on a "vacation." Landing several hours later, both worn out from not being able to sleep and the plane ride, we reached the house. It was similar to Anh's house: small and tight, barely able to house all of us, but we made it work.

The night of the 29th, Tâm whispered for me to wake up in the dark and get all my belongings silently. We ran towards the shores, where I could see the silhouettes of other families trying to get on a fishing ship, ready to head out.

A skinny man helped me onto a ship, but before it was set out to the sea, several armed civilians took hold of our ship and threw everybody onto the sand. Amidst the commotion, I hid two cans of corn and the first-aid kit under a little creaky wooden board.

I was yanked by arm onto the sand, my shoulders felt like it had been ripped from the joints that hold it together. The armed men had us kneel in a line, shoulder by shoulder, and dumped our belongings on the ground. The foods were poured on the sand, mixing in an ugly glop of liquids and solids. It reminded me of barf and I could feel my throat sting with the acid from my stomach. The barf at the back of my throat smelled like whatever mixture was on the ground. Within minutes, the pile became putrid, matte and thick in the faint moonlight.

The men continued to laugh and abuse us. Everybody was too afraid for their lives to do anything, as we all knew they were communists disguised as civilians. One of the men, short, skinny with dry, spiky hair punched a lady in the face for replying to a vulgar question he had asked. Even in the dark, you could tell she suffered painful injuries by the sounds of her quiet sobs. Then, another man was beaten brutally by some of the men, while the others continued

to torment us. All the adults were then stripped naked, while they took turns beating us, just for entertainment. It was humiliating and embarrassing, being exposed and vulnerable. I could feel the cold wind along my spine under my thin shirt, the sand rubbed uncomfortably against my legs and thighs and the places where I had been hit were throbbing with pain.

Again, chaos broke out. Someone had grabbed a gun and began firing at the strange men. The deafening sounds echoed like the waves of the ocean. We made a run for the ship, hastily grabbing clothes and what was left of our belonging. It started out to sea and each of us sat, naked and exhausted from what had happened. Many people were already getting seasick. The smell of sweat, vomit, and salt was repulsive, never seeming to blow away with the ocean breeze.

The sun was up.

While on the boat, I took a peek at the lady who was punched. I could tell her face was smooth before, but is now replaced by a lumpy, swollen mass. It was purple and red, and green veins ran around the swelling.

The ship sailed for many more hours. It swayed back and forth, following the guidance of each and every wave as we went out further to the sea. The children and I began to feel the growling of our stomachs, some began to cry when they could no longer handle it. On the other hand, the adults were unsure of what to do and continued staring at each other in the loud silence. Even in the open space, the cries seemed to echo.

Then I remembered the secret stash I had hidden under the board. I pushed passed the two families crowding on the open deck space and began locating the faulty wood panel. After a few minutes, I took out the can. Being as careful as I can, I made sure the other can was well-hidden, as a precautionary measure.

“Ôi ông Ơi, coi con nhỏ kia có đồ ăn kìa!”

They began to notice the can of food in my hand, “Nó có này giờ mà nó không chia cho ai ăn hết. Con nhỏ đáng ghét!” A lady began cursing me out.

She was not happy with the fact that I did not share the food earlier and approached me with a clenched fist.

“Đưa cho người lớn ăn trước! Mà nhỏ, không cần ăn nhiều.” I cannot believe she just demanded to eat the food before everybody else. And I cannot believe her justification is that she is older and bigger so she requires more nutrients. Last I checked, I am the one who needs to grow.

I was already sizing her up in case I needed to fight her, for obvious reasons. She was a fairly large lady. Significantly taller than me and if I had to guess, about 5’10. It was surprising she was that tall considering the time and place. But she was rich, I was sure of that. Around her neck was a shiny necklace with pearls so white and precious that you would think they were stars.

I did not hand over the can, which angered her even more. Her eyes narrowed at me. The sun showed brighter in the sky and the shadows dropped beneath her eyes.

You could see her chest rose as she inhaled a large chunk of air and screamed at my face at the top of her lungs, demanding that I hand over the can, “MÀY ĐƯA ĐÂY CHO TAO!”

Tâm and Quỳnh Anh came over, concerned with the ruckus this lady was causing, “Có chuyện gì vậy?”

She wondered what was wrong, and I told her exactly what had happened: the selfish lady had demanded to be fed before everyone else. Her actions made my face burn with anger, as I felt it get red and hotter.

I shouted that the little ones should be fed first, “Cái cô này sẽ ăn cuối cùng và mấy đứa nhỏ sẽ được ăn trước. Cháu không biết mình sẽ ở trên thuyền bao lâu, nên mình nên hòa đồng chung với nhau.” I added in that we do not know how long we will be stranded for, so we should all get along. The lady turned away with a quick motion, clearly mad and proceeded to badmouth me to her husband, who seemed embarrassed with her behavior.

Several days went by, and the first can of corn was gone in half that time. I had no motivation to do anything, not that there was anything to do, and the lack of energy made me more tired than ever. I always thought about my dad’s lectures on not eating, about how my acid stomach could start eating me from the inside out due to the lack of food.

On the sixth day, a larger ship approached us. They did not speak Vietnamese, which was expected since we were in international waters. They welcomed us on their ship and fed

us. It was many days since my last bite of corn, so I stuffed my face with their food, and the refreshing drink of water was delightful. My stomach expanded from the heavy amount of food I was eating. Several of us, including Tâm, Quỳnh Anh and I, tried to go back to our ship to sleep there, which was anchored next to the larger ship. We soon found out their hospitality was just an act.

While some of our people were busy eating, they had begun gathering us into their open deck. One man was holding a gun and spoke fast in a language none of us can understand. I assumed it was Thai because I had read many stories about numerous Thai pirate attacks. What we could understand was, however, that they wanted any jewelry or valuable items we had. They gestured at a dainty, gold necklace a woman was wearing. It was ironic that they are giving us a choice between taking of our jewelry ourselves or getting it ripped off.

When the young Vietnamese woman resisted the force while they were searching for valuable items, a short, scrawny man slapped her and yanked her into the closed area. Following hours after the unsuccessful assault, they threw us on our own ship and left us to die in the sea. The young lady they had taken away were also thrown in, her clothes torn and face beaten. Her sparkling brown eyes no longer sparkled with courage; it was now replaced with fear and emptiness. I took the first-aid kit from my secret nook and tended to her injuries. Dying of an infection during this time is not something I would wish upon a person. No one dared to ask what happened to her.

When a second ship approached us three days later, we were all on edge. *What if the same thing happens again?* We all sat, huddled together, as our men tried talking with the men on the boat. The American man on boat ensures us that these were the Malaysian government boat, whose mission was to save any Vietnamese refugees escaping the war.

Still skeptical, we came upon their boat and ate their food. Luckily, the events of the last, unknown boat encounter did not occur again. I reluctantly got on their ship and huddled together with Anh and Tâm farther away on the side. The ship's engine roared again and we departed from our damaged fishing boat.

We reached land a short time afterward. Several guides led us to an area where there were many tents set up, equally spaced apart. It was a small camp, consisting of approximately

50 families, all from Vietnam. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner were served daily, although many resorted to growing their own food as the meal portions were not enough to be full. We slept on hard mattresses and wore clothes donated by international organizations.

This went on for two years. Then my body went numb, on a random day. My last memory was of Anh and Tâm telling me about their VISAs to America getting accepted.

I was met with the same warm sensation and lavender scent, still lingering in my memories from two years ago. I sat up, tearful from relief and anger. I was glad to be home, but the thought of not being able to say goodbye to Tâm and Anh made me furious. I walked slowly to the bathroom, unsure of where things were located in the house. *Two years is a very long time to be away from home*, I thought.

I stared at myself in the mirror and my mirror-self stared back. My face was not the same as it was. I could barely remember what I had looked like two years ago, yet I could not recognize this version of myself. Riddled with the experiences I went through, I went to my room and laid down on my bed. I looked directly at my off-white ceiling, remembering the moldy, cream-colored ceiling I had stared at my first night on the wooden bed.

Travel through the hourglass, such as back to the Emu War in 1932 or to the Vietnam War in 1975, and face the people's struggles during a time of difficulty. The stories entails adventures and thrilling plot-twists, through war scenes or racial injustices. This collection of contemporary short-stories will allow you to enter a world of violence, driven by the forces of poverty and segregation, and face a whole new environment of the past.

